

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STOCKH 02884 271543Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T STOCKHOLM 2884

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1.
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, SW, IN, US
SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS TREATMENT OF THE VIGGEN SALE

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 2873, (B) STOCKHOLM 2860

1. AS PARTIALLY REFLECTED IN REF (A), SWEDISH PRESS COVERAGE OF THE US POSITION ON THE VIGGEN HAS CONTINUED TO BE HEAVY WITH ARTICLES APPEARING TODAY IN ALL PAPERS QUITE ASIDE FROM THE EDITORIAL COVERAGE. CRITICISM OF THE US HAS BEEN MUCH MORE MUTED IN PAPERS OTHER THAN EXPRESSEN WHICH BROKE THE STORY, PERHAPS PARTLY REFLECTING SOUR GRAPES AT BEING SCOOPED.

2. INTERNAL POLITICAL FACTORS MAY ALSO BE AT WORK IN SOME CASES. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AFTONBLADET, WHICH IS OFTEN CRITICAL OF THE US, CARRIED A VERY MILD ACCOUNT, FOR EXAMPLE, IMPLYING THAT THE US POSITION MAY HAVE MORE MERIT THAN THE SWEDISH--A POSITION THAT MAY REFLECT GROWING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SNIPING AT THE FALLDIN GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE POLICY AND ESPECIALLY ITS CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN A SWEDISH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY INTO THE NEXT GENERATION OF AIRCRAFT (THE B3LA).

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ALTHOUGH SWEDISH PRESS HAS STILL NOT UNCOVERED LINDER'S MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, UNDER SECRETARY OF TRADE JOHAN NORDENFOLK IS CITED IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES THAT THE MATTER IS NOT YET FINALLY SETTLED AND THAT A DIALOGUE WITH THE US IS CONTINUING.

4. MFA IS BEING QUERIED BY SWEDISH PRESS AS TO HOW THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PURSUE THE MATTER. THEY ARE INFORMING PRESS THAT NEXT STEPS ARE UNDER STUDY, BUT THAT THEY HAVE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN TO WASHINGTON. THEY WILL NOT MENTION LINDER-VANCE MEETING, HOWEVER, UNLESS DIRECTLY CONFRONTED WITH THE SPECIFIC QUESTION AND HAVE BEEN REASSURED THAT WE WILL PROCEED ALONG SAME LINES.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IT IS COMFORTING THAT PRESS CRITICISM OF US IS NOT AS BITTER THUS FAR AS IT COULD BE, WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT US NOT BE PERCEIVED AS GLOATING OVER THAT POINT (IF IT REMAINS A POINT) OR AS ATTEMPTING TO SEPARATE SWEDISH OPINION FROM GOS. IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO UNDERCUT A FRIENDLY, GENERALLY PRO-US, GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO A STRONG DEFENSE BY SEEMING TO SIDE WITH DOMESTIC CRITICS OF SUCH A POLITY.
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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